

From: Gregory Gelfond
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/25/02 11:27am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To Whom It May Concern,

It has come to my attention from various sources, including a recent interview with Judge Robert Bork, that the current Microsoft antitrust settlement would do the opposite of what it intends. Instead of breaking Microsoft's monopoly of the personal computer operating systems market, it would enable the company to expand its monopoly into other arenas. Specifically, the areas of Internet service, and content.

As it currently stands, web sites created using Microsoft's Frontpage program are only viewable using Microsoft's Internet Explorer web browser. While by itself, such tight integration between products may seem a boon to consumers, it is actually quite harmful. What the company has done, is subtly change the open standards set by an independent body concerning the protocols, and language in which web sites are created, to a proprietary 'standard' owned and controlled by Microsoft. This makes other browsers, and even in some cases other computer platforms unable to read such sites. In their recent iteration of the Internet Explorer web browser, Microsoft has also broken support for certain plugins, namely Apple Computer's Quicktime plugin. This has a similar effect to the one I described above, and also has the effect of rendering a substantial amount of web content Microsoft only. This defeats the entire purpose of the world wide web. Similar examples can be seen with the companies developement of it's own Java language, which again breaks the open standard, and with it's .NET initiative.

If the company is allowed to continue in such a fashion, it would do a great deal of harm not only to the consumer public at home, but also in the education environment where the free flow of information is a vital necessity. Also with the recent security flaws in their operating system, a corporate monopoly would compound the problems by prohibiting better products from gaining a foothold in the marketplace.

One proposed remedy that I believe would benefit the consumer more is the following : Microsoft's preload agreements with computer vendors should be vacated and new ones prohibited, Microsoft's should open it's office suite data file formats, and Microsoft should submit present and future Microsoft networking protocols to an independent open standards body.

Thank You For Your Time,
Gregory Gelfond